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CHAPTER III

STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

SETTLERS AND NOMADS

621 The Rwala divide human beings into *ḥaḍar*, or those who
619 dwell in permanent houses, and *'arab*, or those who dwell in
101 movable tents. Arab, therefore, is the name given throughout
the desert to the inhabitant of a black tent only. The phrase
829 is used: "*'Arabna raḥalow, 'arabna nazalow*; our Arabs have removed, our Arabs have encamped," in reference to members of the same kin (see below, pp. 48f.). The *'arab al-ʒebila* are members of the same tribe. *'Arab ad-dira* is the common name of the nomads who are found in the tilled areas and on their borders, irrespective of the tribe to which they belong. The word *'orbân* expresses membership of various clans or tribes. *'Orbân 'ala ḍmejr* denotes that in the environs of Ḍmejr are encamped members of various clans and tribes. If the herdsmen or hunters meet an unknown nomad in their territory, they inquire: "*Ent min ên jâ walad*, where art thou from, man?" If he says: "*Min hal-'arab*, from these Arabs," they ask: "*Fâhmîn ennak min al-'arab mâr min ajj al-'orbân*, we know that thou art from the Arabs; but from which of the various Arabs?"

621 The dwellers in houses, *ḥaḍar*, are divided into *ḥarâwne*
221 (the individual is known as *ḥarwêni*), or those who never leave
342 their permanent dwelling, and *ra'w* (or *ra'ijje*), or those who change from their permanent dwellings during the rainy season to movable tents. After the sowing of crops in the autumn, the *ra'w* or *ra'ijje* leave their villages and with their flocks of goats and sheep make their way into the steppe, where they dwell both in black goat's-hair tents and in gray tents of cotton fabric. At the end of April and in May, when the harvest is near, they return from the steppe to their houses.

101 The Arabs consist of Bedouins and *šuâja* (or *šujân*). The
233 *šuâja* have two things black, *lehom swâdên*, black tents of goat's hair and flocks of black goats and sheep. These flocks

do not permit them to go into the interior of the desert, *má jeḥarreżûn*. They are limited to the territory where there is abundance of water and where annuals grow every year. They encamp on the edge of the desert and are therefore known as *ruḥûm ał-dîre*, relatives of the (people of the) settled country; they do not undertake extensive raids, *ġazw*, and they acknowledge the supremacy of various Bedouins, to whom they pay a tax for protection, *ḫâwa*. The Bedouins are Arabs who breed camels exclusively, or at least in the main, and for ten months dwell in the interior of the desert, *jeḥarreżûn*. At the end of June they go to the edge of the desert, *jeġarrebûn*, dwell among the settlers until the middle of August or the beginning of September, provide themselves with grain, clothing, and weapons, and then return to the desert again.

On the edge of the desert a constant increase or decrease of the population can be observed. If the government guarantees complete security of life and property to the inhabitants of the towns and villages, the herdsmen of goats and sheep are transformed into active farmers; on all sides they build cottages, hamlets come into existence, and the *ra'ʿ* and *ḥwâja* become peaceful settlers. They entrust their goats and sheep to the care of various clans of Bedouins, who do not go back to the open desert but remain on the border between villages and settlements and are themselves transformed into *ḥwâja*. If there is no strong government in the populated regions, security of life and property disappears and there follows a decrease of population. The permanent house is exchanged for the moveable tent; the farmers become *ḥwâja*. The former settlers, however, never become real Bedouins, because the actual Bedouins will never acknowledge them as equals. The term Bedouin is, hence, much narrower than the term Arab. In the view of the Rwala not all inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula are actually Arabs. Only those are Arabs who dwell in movable tents. Not all the Arabs, however, are Bedouins, but only those who spend the greater part of the year in the interior of the desert and who breed mostly camels. The Rwala are recognized by all tribes as being true and pure Bedouins. They are *ba'îdîn aṣ-ṣa'ûa wâsi'în aṣ-ṣa'ana*, they have very extensive territories and drive their enemies far away from their camps. They are *ahl as-sadn w-al-ʿadu*, warriors on horseback, for they are able both to wield the spear and to manage horses.

1 [The Ḫwâja -- Analyst]

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262 Milk is the chief nutriment of the Rwala. Many families
272 live exclusively on it for months at a time; they suffer hunger when there is no abundant pasture and the camels accordingly have little to eat. As they cannot then provide themselves with other food in the interior of the desert, they seek it in the settled territory. The Rwala say: "We feed our children on the sour milk of our camels, *mesaḳḳemin 'ejâlna min leben ḥelâlna.*"

Fig. 22.—A water trough, *ḥoaz*, on a camel (see p. 71).

WHEAT AND OTHER GRAINS

609 The Bedouins are convinced
●829 that the *felláḥîn* are obliged
261 to supply them with food. Everywhere the remark may be heard: "The *felláḥ* must provide food for the Bedouins, *al-bedu 'ejâthom 'ala-l-felláḥ.*" If the *felláḥ* does not give it to them of his own free will, they have the right to take everything they find, and therefore they declare: "Take from the *felláḥ* whatever ye find (or like), *ḫoḏ min al-felláḥ má láḥ.*"

251 Before the Rwala depart into the interior of the desert,
574 *jeḥarrelûn*, they provide themselves with wheat necessary for
261 sustenance. The allowance is one load per person, the load being the amount carried by a camel, about 150 kilograms. In addition to this the ordinary Bedouin carries an additional load for his guests. The head chief usually has fifty to sixty loads of flour and wheat, because he has to feed not only numerous guests but also many of his fellow tribesmen whose supplies enemies have stolen. These are known as *ġa'âf* or *ḥalâl*. The men go from tent to tent and feed as guests; the women beseech the mistress of the tent: "Give me supper, little sister! give me supper! *'ašâši jâ ḫajje 'ašâši.*" When they receive the wheat they carry it to the children and the sick.

252 From the wheat is prepared every day a food called *'ejš*,
824 bread being rarely baked. The tribesmen grind the wheat grains themselves, only the chiefs taking milled flour into the interior of the desert. The Rwala do not believe that milled flour is genuine wheat, for they say: "Wheat is genuine only as long as it is in grain, al-Ramh alli baʿad habben sahih."

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Verse 1. *Bejt* means the whole verse, *ḳâf* its second half and then, specifically, the rhyme of this second half. 3. *Šenâḥ* is a man of morose disposition, who will neither talk nor smile. 4. *'Elem* signifies a report circulating in regard to a man. If such a report is consistent it is considered unshakable. A good report must be that, otherwise a man would fall in the public esteem. 5. *Melwâḥ* is the decoy swung by a falconer when trying to lure a falcon towards him, *lawwaḥ 'ala-ṭ-ṭejr*. When a man breaks off a twig of the luxuriant *rûṭe* and shows it to a riding camel, he coaxes her to come near, *lawwaḥ 'ala-d-ḏelûl*. There are people whose actions lure evil into the tribe, regardless of the fact that their fellow tribesmen are already suffering. 7. *Menhaǧ* is a path or trail. 12. The women will reveal your secret plan, and you will then be unable to realize it. *Sadd* means, in particular, the planning of a great raid against a certain enemy. The men taking part in it do not themselves know accurately either the time of their departure or the enemy they are to attack. Should the commander's wife learn of it she would undoubtedly tell it to some of her friends, and the enemy would receive warning even before the raiders started. 18. When you have a good friend, share your last drop of water with him. Do not confound words with deeds. *Al-'ajn* means both a spring and an eye. *'Edd* is the name of a well with spring water which never dries up. 22. Violence, force, often leads to peace sooner than mildness. 23. *Ḥazz* signifies a passionate desire for something. Out of a youth filled with such a strenuous desire an exemplary being can be formed by a man of good sense. 25. *Nijje* is a plan, intention, desire, which robs a man of sleep, drives him to undertake night marches, and lights him on his way. 26. *Enṭaṭar* is said of a man who likes to eat well and to amuse himself with women. 28. The appeased man has not laid aside his saber; he has only dropped its point and could, if angered again, strike at him who had just appeased him.

1. *'Endi ſetâwi lil-ſahîm al-ſâhem*
   jarmi bḳalb al-ṣâfelin aḥča'
2. *al-'afen low ta'ṭih mâl ḥešet killeh*
   mâ jaškor faḍlak w-lâ jarodd ḫana'
3. *ḥelw elja' ǧâk ma'tâz ḥâǧa*
   w-'afen elja' laḳḳa-l-'amil ḳafa'